



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Bangladesh midfielder Zahid Hossain (jersey number 10) runs past a couple of Macau players during their AFC Challenge Cup qualifier at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. Zahid scored twice as Bangladesh beat Macau 3-0.

Zahid brace sinks Macau Bangladesh in Challenge Cup proper

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh produced the kind of performance one would expect from a

set of professionals against the amateurs of Macau in their final AFC Challenge Cup Group-A qualifying match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

And after the final whistle it was a satisfying result indeed. A 3-0 win for Bangladesh's Brazilian coach Dido and a passage into the final round of the championship next year as the best runners-up ahead of Maldives, who finished second from Group-B but lost the battle of goal difference against Bangladesh.

Bangladesh, who had a one goal advantage over Maldives (who scored four and conceded five against Bangladesh's 2-2 after their second game) before going into the final match, were left with an easy option of a draw against Macau to progress into the final round after Myanmar had won the first match of the day 1-0 against Cambodia.

The option for a draw certainly released the pressure on Bangladesh against a team that has conceded five goals in their first two games. It also brought the best of Bangladesh after a not-so-impressive 1-0 win against Cambodia in their opening match followed by a heart-breaking 1-2 defeat at the hands of eventual winners Myanmar.

Midfielder Mamun opened the Bangladesh account in the 38th minute before Zahid's brace after the break saw the hosts sign off with flying colours in front of a five thousand home crowd.

It was a match where Bangladesh played proper football albeit against a weak opponent. With Mamun working tirelessly in the middle

and an overlapping right-back Rashed, who won his first national cap in place of suspended Nasir, moving menacingly down the flank there was little to do for the Bangladesh defence as the ball was mostly confined to the other half of the ground.

Still, Bangladesh had to wait a bit longer for their first goal when Zahid came out of the bench and made an immediate impact with a dipping cross from the right that striker Enamul, who scored both the goals in Bangladesh last two games, headed from close only to partially parried off by Macau goalkeeper Leong Chon Kit. But a lurking Mamun made no mistake to put the loose ball into the net with an intelligent back heel.

Zahid's two goals after the break were testimony of a quality striker. Understandably disappointed for sitting on the bench in the last two games, Zahid made a statement with a stunning 35-yarder in the 68th minute. His cannon-like right-footer was so unexpected that a pint-size Leong could hardly react in time.

Zahid, who also saw a grounder come off the post in the 62nd minute, struck his second goal in the 71st minute. This time he played a couple of one-tuos with his striking partner Emily before firing in a low drive from the edge of the box. It could easily be a hat-trick for him had he not missed the mark in the last ten minutes of the game.

Coach Shafiqul Islam Manik was satisfied with the win but conceded that a significant improvement was needed if they wanted to compete in the tournament proper.

"We are happy that we have qualified for the final round of the 2010 AFC Challenge Cup but with success comes added responsibility. All the teams in the final round are ranked higher

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Deccan's first loss

AFP, Centurion



Deccan Chargers surrendered the last perfect Indian Premier League record this season after a six-wicket loss to Delhi Daredevils Thursday.

The result left the teams sharing first place in the Twenty20 extravaganza with four victories each from five matches and the Adam Gilchrist-led Chargers ahead on net run rate.

It was a tense, low-scoring affair on a lovely autumn day at Centurion Park and as the game slipped from Deccan, Australian Gilchrist and West Indian Fidel Edwards were angered by several umpiring decisions.

Deccan are a transformed team after finishing bottom of the eight-team standings last season, but batsman-cum-wicketkeeper Gilchrist conceded his outfit fell about 20 runs short when compiling 148-9 in 20 overs.

Australian Dirk Nannes played a key role in keeping Chargers in check, snatching the wickets of Gilchrist (8) and South African Herschelle Gibbs (0) and conceding just 16 runs in four overs of bounce, pace and swing.

West Indian Dwayne Smith was the only

Deccan batsmen to get on top of the Daredevils attack, hitting 48 off 28 balls, including two sixes and five fours.

Skipper Virender Sehwag, who opted to open after having five stitches inserted in a fielding-induced finger injury, got the Delhi innings off to a good start with a boundary-laced 20 before his fourth-over departure.

Local boy AB de Villiers failed for once, making just five before joining his captain in the pavilion and the exit of opener Gautam Gambhir left Daredevils 49-3 seven overs into their response.

Although the runs came slowly, Delhi did not lose another wicket until the 18th over and Sri Lankan Tim Dilshan smashed the winning runs with eight balls to spare and finished unbeaten on 52 and top scorer.

SCORES IN BRIEF

DECCAN CHARGERS: 148-9 in 20 overs (Smith 48, Suman 23, Bilakhia 22; Nannes 2-16, Nehra 2-30)

DELHI DAREDEVILS: 150-4 in 18.4 overs (Dilshan 52 not out, Karthik 41, Sehwag 20; Shaobh 2-20)

Result: Delhi Daredevils won by six wickets. Man-of-the-match: Dirk Nannes.

Myanmar finish in style

SPORTS REPORTER



Myanmar finished as champions of Group-A by winning their third and final match against Cambodia (1-0) in the AFC Challenge Cup Qualifiers

Group-A at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The game went into injury time at 0-0 when Myanmar midfielder Myo Min Tun brilliantly lobbed the ball into the box where striker Yaza Win Thein poked the ball past the onrushing goalkeeper to seal the match.

The match however was fiercely competed in the middle and Cambodia made some dangerous advances towards the Myanmar post. In the 64th minute a free kick from Cambodian forward San Narith hit the Myanmar post and ricocheted off to teammate Khuon Laboravy who took another shot to no avail. Four minutes later another freekick from a Cambodian midfielder missed the far left corner of the post by couple of inches. The Indo-Chinese kingdom looked aggressive in their approach as a minute later number 14 Sovannarath earned himself a yellow card.

However the match's fate was decided when Myanmar number 9 Yaza Win Thein scored the match winning goal and took his

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Entering new avenues Opening match tomorrow

SHAHIDUL ISLAM, Chittagong



Chittagong Mohammedan and Top Sports Club of Noakhali will be part of country's cricket history to tomorrow when they play the opening match of the much-anticipated Port City Cricket League Twenty20 tournament at the MA Aziz Stadium.

Private television channel ATN Bangla will telecast the match live from 2:30pm.

The Group A encounter would launch a competition that took a month to organise by the organisers of Chittagong Divisional Krira Sangtha (CDKS), who took inspiration from popular Indian tournaments such as the IPL and ICL.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

Young Cricketers beat Rayer Bazar by one wicket in a last-over thriller in the Super League stage of Second Division Cricket at the Jagannath Hall ground yesterday.

Chasing 264 for a win, the Mirpur-based club reached the target with one ball to spare. Rajib remained unbeaten on 47 after Amin scored 72 off 74 balls. Earlier, Rayer Bazar rode on Shohag's 87 to score 263 for eight in 50 overs.

At the neighbouring Dhaka University ground, Gopibagh (280-8) beat Kalindi (274-9) by two wickets in another last-over thriller, despite Kalindi's Aman scoring a century.

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Did U Know?

The women's weightlifting competition was first included at the Sydney Olympics in 2000.



What to WATCH

- TEN Sports**
 - Australia v Pakistan (Fourth ODI) Live from 8:00pm
 - SET Max** (FRIDAY)
 - Indian Premier League Kolkata Knight Riders v Mumbai Indians Live from 4:30pm
 - Royal Challengers Bangalore v Kings XI Punjab Live from 8:30pm
 - (SATURDAY)**
 - Indian Premier League Deccan Chargers v Rajasthan Royals Live from 4:30pm
 - Chennai Super Kings v Delhi Daredevils Live from 8:30pm
 - ESPN** (SATURDAY)
 - English Premier League Middlesbrough v Man United Live from 5:40pm
 - Chelsea v Fulham Live from 7:55pm
 - STAR Sports** (SATURDAY)
 - English Premier League Portsmouth v Arsenal Live from 7:55pm

Chennai ride on Raina

AFP, Centurion



A confused Suresh Raina's near-century paved the way for the Chennai Super Kings' second victory of the Indian Premier League over the Rajasthan Royals on Thursday.

In the second match of a double-header, Raina made 98 in guiding his team to 164-5 after Rajasthan won the toss and sent them in to bat.

He reached his half-century from only 26 deliveries and thought he had reached a ton off 55 balls in the final over - the result of a mistake displayed on the stadium scoreboard.

In fact, Raina was only on 98 when he lifted his bat in celebration. He went big off the next ball - the third-last of the innings - but was caught by Proteas skipper Graeme Smith in the deep and must have been seething when he got back to the dressing room.

Title holders Rajasthan were dismissed for 126 runs with seamer Lakshmipathy Balaji returning a magnificent 4-21 as Chennai secured a comfortable 38-run win.

Kamran Khan, who injured himself bowling, did not bat.

The Chennai bowlers combined superbly, with South African Albie Morkel and New Zealander Jacob Oram picking up two wickets each.

Middle-order batsman Ravindra Jadeja put up a fight for the defending champions with a defiant 37 off 33 balls, but received little support as Chennai took a morale-boosting victory.

Earlier, Rajasthan spinner Yusuf Pathan, who led the attack with a return of 2-17, had done a tremendous job with the new ball, removing Chennai openers Matthew Hayden and Parthiv Patel cheaply.

But Raina and Subramian Badrinath put on 64 runs for the third wicket to steady the ship.

SCORES IN BRIEF CHENNAI SUPER KINGS: 164-5 in 20 overs (Raina 98, Badrinath 29, Dhoni 22; Pathan 2-17, Patel 2-25)

RAJASTHAN ROYALS: 126-9 in 19.3 overs (Jadeja 37, Quiney 28, Pathan 20; Balaji 4-21, Morkel 2-21, Oram 2-27)

Result: Chennai Super Kings won by 38 runs. Man-of-the-match: Suresh Raina.

MU gain slim advantage

AFP, Manchester



Manchester United will take a 1-0 lead into the second leg of their Champions League semifinal with Arsenal after the holders failed to fully capitalise on their domination here on Wednesday.

An inspired display from Gunners goalkeeper Manuel Almunia ensured that John O'Shea's 17th-minute strike was the only reward Sir Alex Ferguson's side reaped from a first leg encounter they comfortably controlled.

Carlos Tevez's decisive role in the weekend comeback against Tottenham earned him a place in a United starting line-up in which there was no room for either Dimitar Berbatov or Ryan Giggs, who was made to wait until 66 minutes had elapsed before coming on to make his 800th appearance for the club. Arsenal's defensive problems were

eased as former United centreback Mikael Silvestre and teenage left back Kieran Gibbs both came through late fitness tests, although the opening exchanges hardly inspired confidence in a back four missing both William Gallas and Gael Clichy.

Within two minutes, Darren Fletcher's cross had given Wayne Rooney the chance to force Manuel Almunia into a fine one-handed save and it quickly became apparent that Arsenal would struggle to cope with the tempo of United's opening salvos.

A superb double save from Almunia denied Tevez just after quarter of an hour had elapsed but the resulting corner saw the holders claim the opener that their efforts deserved.

The initial delivery failed to trouble the Arsenal backline but, fatally, Michael Carrick was allowed to pick the ball up beyond the back post and hook it back across goal. Theo Walcott's attempt to intercept

only served to direct the ball into the path of O'Shea and the Ireland defender finished with the aplomb of a seasoned striker, hitting a half-volley into the roof of the net.

Still reeling from that setback, Arsenal were fortunate not to concede a second when Cristiano Ronaldo headed an inviting cross from Tevez straight at Almunia.

But as the first half came to a close, the visitors began to string a few passes together although there were no clear chances to show for their attractive build-up and Almunia had to be quickly off his line to deny Ronaldo after a slipshod passback by Gibbs.

With United's energy levels slipping, chances were thinner on the ground after the interval, but the hosts were still unfortunate not to double their lead with just over 20 minutes left after a piece of brilliance from Ronaldo.

Picking up a loose ball just inside the Gunners' half, the Portuguese winger

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PHOTO: AFP

Manchester United's Irish defender John O'Shea (C) celebrates with teammates Darren Fletcher (L) and Rio Ferdinand after scoring the all-important goal against Arsenal during their Champions League semifinal first-leg match at Old Trafford on Wednesday.